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16 January 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: Comments Concerning the Use of the "C" Camera for  
Peripheral Reconnaissance

1. The recent termination of development of the "C" camera comes at a time when there is an increasing indication that this equipment could be used to prolong the operational "life expectancy" of the U-2 aircraft. As the overflight capability of the U-2 becomes restricted due to increases in Soviet intercept capability, its relative value for peripheral reconnaissance will increase. Within approximately six months, the U-2 may be the only suitable aircraft available to the U. S. for peripheral reconnaissance. This is due to the series of complaints involving real or inadvertent penetration of Russian borders which is certain to result in an increasing amount of Soviet indignation and accelerated attempts to prevent either overflight or peripheral reconnaissance. In any event, the utilization of the U-2 for peripheral reconnaissance will certainly outlast its use for over-flight purposes.
2. At the present time it is believed that peripheral ELINT reconnaissance will provide the most significant information, particularly pertaining to the pre-eminence of hostilities: a priority national objective. Requirements also exist for information pertaining to Russian technological advancements in the ballistics missile area of interest. At present, the undersigned is not aware of any specific program aimed at obtaining information relating to missile Order of Battle, a "future priority objective."
3. Concurrent with ELINT operations, the successful development of the "C" camera package would produce a more effective and efficient peripheral program in that much of the information obtained by the ELINT systems could be substantiated. It would also provide photography for detailed analysis and for targeting purposes. Long-focal-length photography would also be valuable in maintaining surveillance of border areas or for off-shore photography not involving overflight. Space permitting, successful development of the "C" camera would also provide an adequate primary mission capable for any follow-on vehicle in that it would offset the smaller scale resulting from an increase in altitude.

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